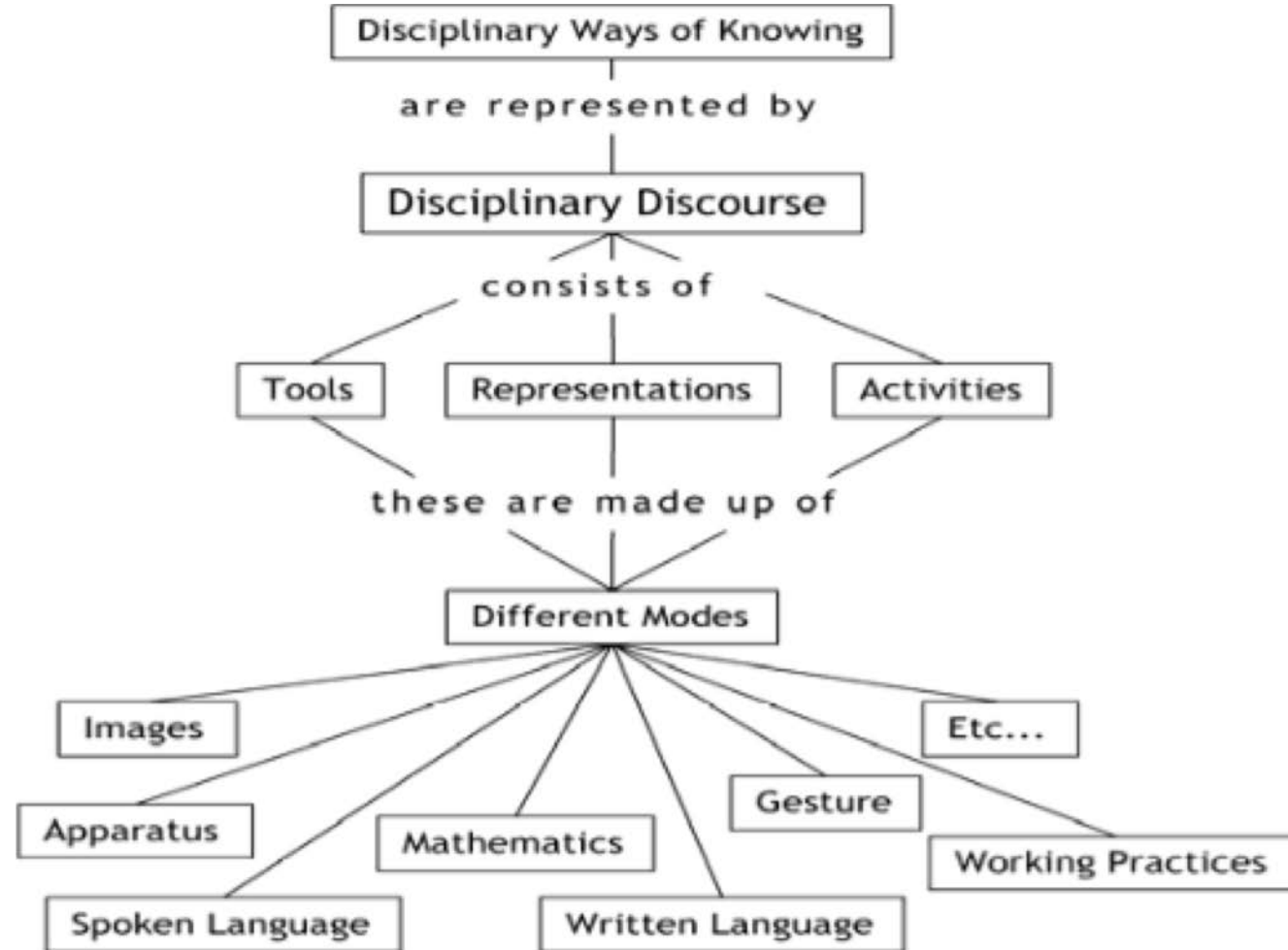


# Aligning existing library services to disciplinary discourse practices: Mapping the intellectual journeys of graduate students

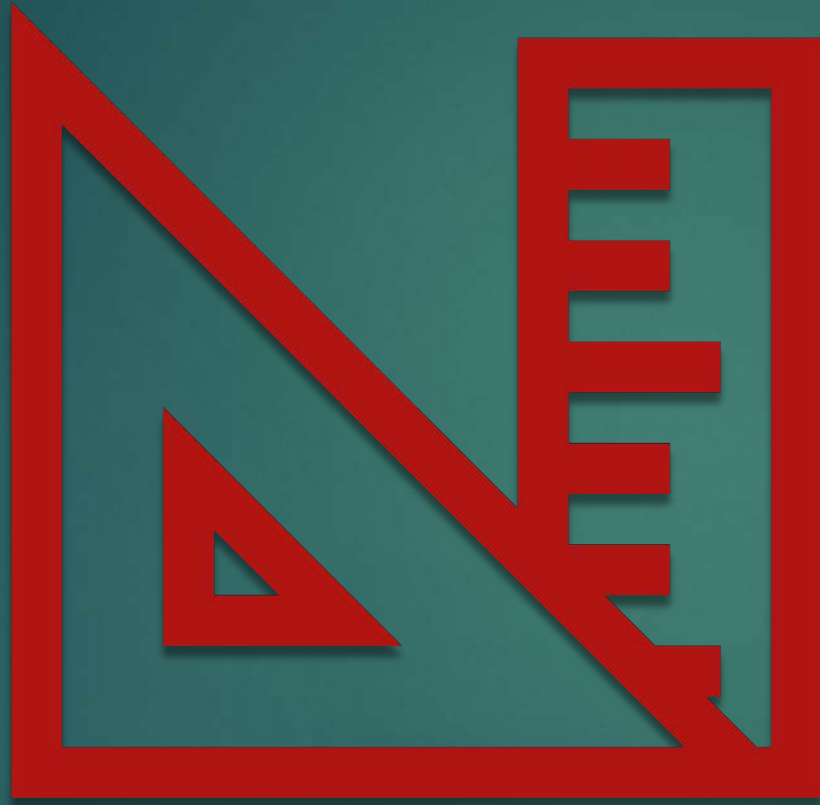
Elizabeth Kline  
University of Arizona Libraries



- ▶ Disciplinary Discourse Guiding Framework “is the complex of representations, tools, and activities of a discipline”, (Airey & Linder, 2009).

# Today's Objectives

- ▶ Identify student intellectual journeys for various graduate programs -- what is similar and what is different
- ▶ Highlight a few discourse practices in disciplines
- ▶ Pinpoint obstacles encountered by graduate students per faculty perspective
- ▶ Analyze language gap between library users and librarians and align existing services to graduate intellectual journeys

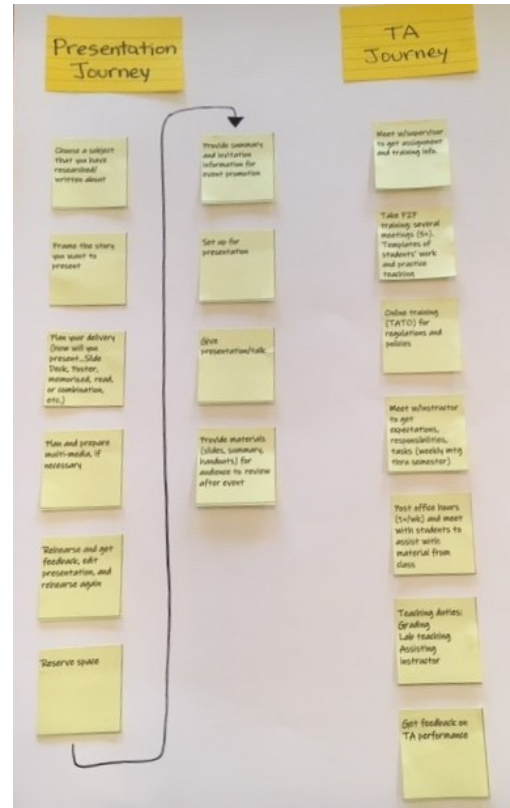
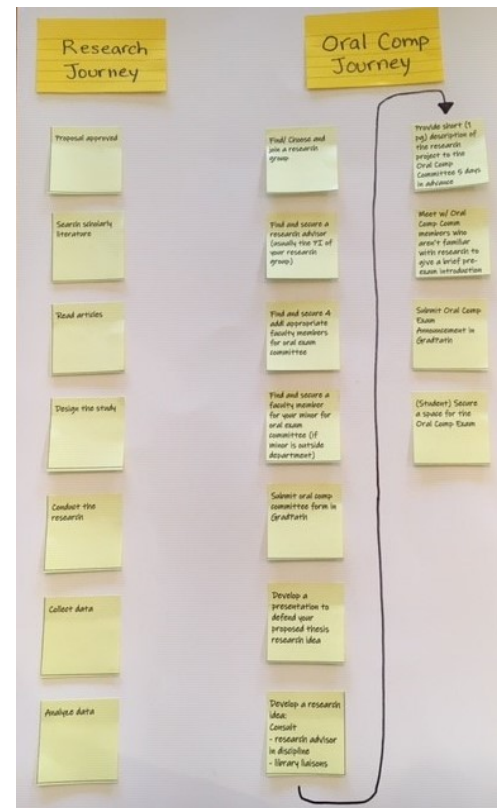
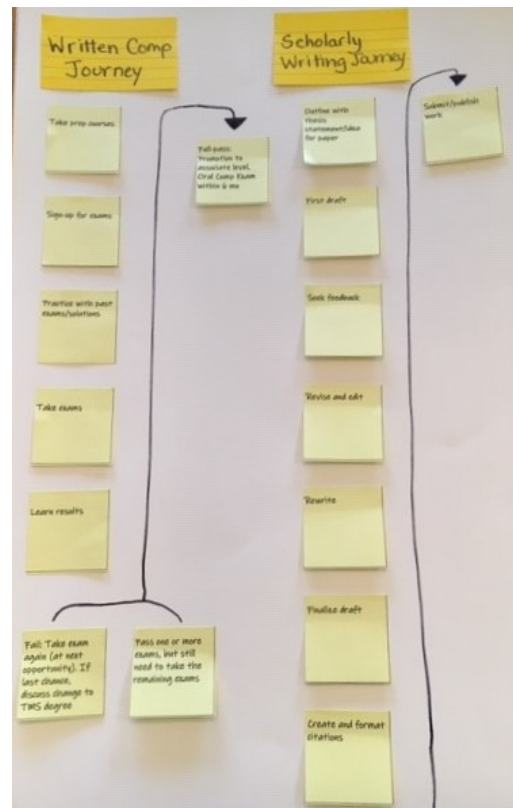


# Designing the Study

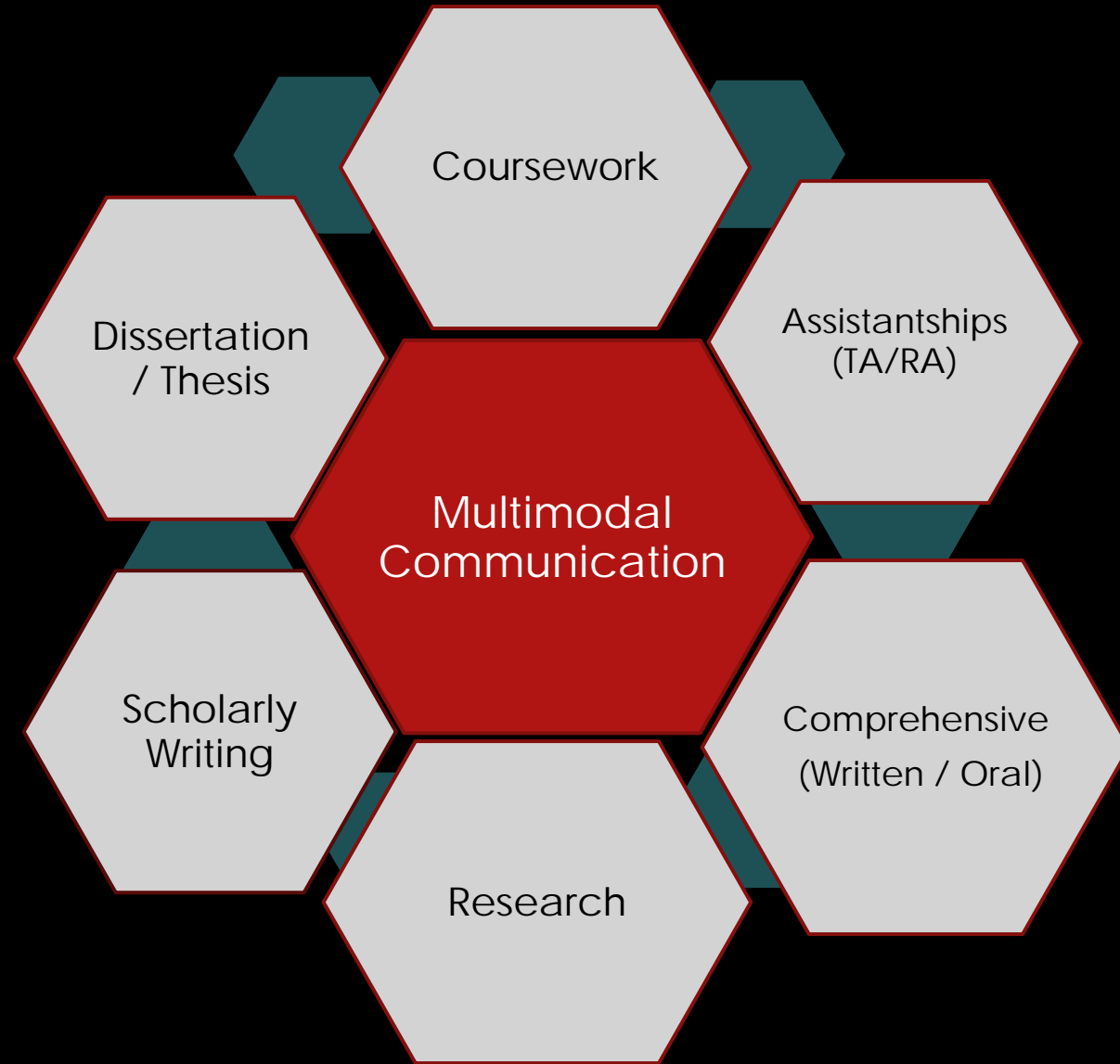
# Methodology

- ▶ Conduct individual 45 min - hour long faculty interviews
- ▶ Use “journey” models to guide questioning and discussion
- ▶ Record interviews for post-transcription and analysis
- ▶ Review and code transcripts iteratively
- ▶ Document emerging themes

# Journey Models



# Intellectual Journey of Graduate Students\*



\*Kline 2020 forthcoming



# Disciplinary Discourse Findings



## Journeys – Similarities

- ▶ Academic graduate requirements – courses (minor), committees, exams, thesis
- ▶ Graduate assistantships - primarily TA
- ▶ Presentations
- ▶ Writing as a critical activity

# Journeys – Differences

- ▶ Core course
- ▶ Reading lists (from core courses or customized)
- ▶ Different comp exam formats
- ▶ Thesis (traditional monograph or article-based)
- ▶ Main disciplinary endpoints (article, book, teaching, research, licensure)

# Unique Discourse Practices

- ▶ Solo model
- ▶ Team-based model, often with lab rotations
- ▶ Use of audio/visuals is critical
- ▶ Not common to get published until after graduation
- ▶ Students personally experiencing subject matter
- ▶ Article field but evolving to a book field
- ▶ Very unique writing conventions
- ▶ Practicum/internships provide the critical training for professions



# The Graduate Student Experience: Faculty Perspective

# Areas of Struggle

- ▶ Reading lists
- ▶ Exam preparation and anxiety
- ▶ Dissertation topic
- ▶ Managing research data
- ▶ Multidisciplinary areas
- ▶ Writing

## Reading Lists

► *Lists are established by faculty.* "The faculty, every maybe two or three years in those areas will get together and look over the reading list and add and subtract readings. But *the students are required to master that list and then take those comprehensive exams* -- typically in the third year."

► "The *graduate student is independently responsible for completing the reading list.*"

## Exam Preparation and Anxiety

▶ "They *all wait too long to take their comprehensive exams*; wait till end of 2nd year or third year."

▶ "Comps is a big slow down in our department, particularly the *written comps are a big slow down*. They take from *initiating the process to completing the written comps, is often around a year*."

▶ "They get these reading lists and they go away (to study). They don't really go away, but *it often feels like students get just lost*. They look at the volume of material, and even though a lot of it they've read before, and they should be somewhat familiar with, it just, *it overwhelms them*."

## Dissertation Topic

▶ "I think some *people struggle with committing to their topic.*"

▶ "For anyone working at a PhD – and it happened to me – you're in the coursework and that's great. Someone's telling you what to do. Do this assignment. Write that paper, and then you're done. Okay, *what do you want to do your dissertation on? And many times they say, 'I don't know'.*"

▶ "The student is really almost never told what to do, and they have to really come up with an idea. ...So *we used to lose a lot of students because they couldn't focus formulating a thesis topic.*"



# Managing Research Data

► "I think faculty and students, especially students, *have no idea how much work it is to actually curate your data and make it useable for anybody else.* I'm really, *really concerned that my graduate student would leave and all the work they did is interpretable by the next student that comes in.* And *there could be a gap of a year or two before the next person comes and picks up that project again,* and so the thing that I've learned over twenty years is that you really, really, really got to make sure that that person downloads their brain in a format that can be understood by the next person."

## Multidisciplinary Areas

► "Because we're multidisciplinary we don't have research methods here. *Yes they absolutely struggle with research methods.* They really need a course that says 'how do you do this thing?' *That's why interdisciplinary programs need to be near disciplines because disciplines are often where you get the methods.* "Thematic based" students don't get that training and struggle."

► "*There's a lot of different places we publish.* And then also a factor that comes into play some students want to get employment in interdisciplinary programs like criminology or Mexican-American Studies or something like that. Right, because you're not going to get hired unless you're publishing in their journals. So *that is a little more difficult because you have to kind of know the pecking order within your own field, as well as Mexican-American Studies or criminology.*"

## Writing Issues

► "I usually spend with them a lot of one-on-one time and kind of going through what's your thought process. Because usually it's not a problem with writing or the grammar so much as *it is a problem with understanding the way a journal article is structured*. So the students who took technical writing as an undergraduate are definitely at an advantage because they have a little bit more of that mindset."

► "I wonder if you guys could, I don't know if it's your role, but *create writing communities for PhD students that somehow there are...spaces where students get together across disciplines*. I know some of them organize informal ones but *I'm always worried it's like clicky and there are some that are left out*."



# Addressing the Language Gap

# Aligning Services

- ▶ Exam support & dissertation topic
- ▶ Research management tools and resources
- ▶ Support for team based research models
- ▶ Multidisciplinary areas
- ▶ \*Services aligned to main disciplinary endpoints
- ▶ \*Multimodal communication skills
- ▶ Writing support services



Questions?